

Helpful Mental Health Resources for First Responders Under Stress

□ Listen to this

During this time of heightened stress and anxiety, know that it's OK to reach out for help – and these resources will help you find it.

As a first responder, you're probably experiencing the type of stress that can cause people to feel overwhelmed, anxious, and depressed. These feelings are normal responses considering the crisis. However, when they last too long, impair your ability to function, reemerge from a previous condition, or present a significant risk to you or others, it's a good time to get help.

How do I know when to reach out?

If you are reading this, that might mean you are looking to see if help is available and that is your first cue. You might find yourself, or someone you care about, experiencing depression, anxiety, insomnia, anger, violence, alcohol or substance abuse, traumatic stress, or having suicidal thoughts.

Have a screening appointment?

Even if you're unsure if you need help, you can always have a screening appointment with a mental health provider. If you have a mental health provider already, or can access one through your insurance, Employee Assistance Program, or online therapy services, it's a good first step. You can get direct feedback from a professional on what your needs might be. In addition, there are online support communities compiled by NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, in the link below.

It can be uncomfortable to reach out for help sometimes. However, it is a brave step to take action when it's needed. You can do it for yourself and for those who rely on you.

The resources below are easy to use and include crisis hotlines and text messaging for short term help. In some cases, a professional mental health provider is the best step.

Call 911 for emergencies

To contact a trained crisis counselor:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

SAMHSA National Helpline

1-800-662 HELP (4357)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline

1-800-985-5990; TTY 1-800-846-8517 OR Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

Crisis Text Line

Text "HOME" to 741741

<https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Online therapy platforms:

<https://www.talkspace.com/>

Please also see the following links to additional resources, such as:

SAMHSA; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at

<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/contact-us>

NAMI; National Alliance on Mental Illness
<https://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide>

MHA; Mental Health America at
<https://mhanational.org/finding-help>

(Source: Thrive Global)